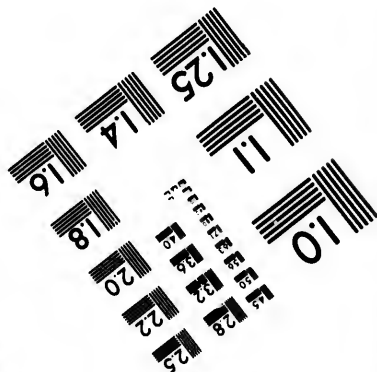
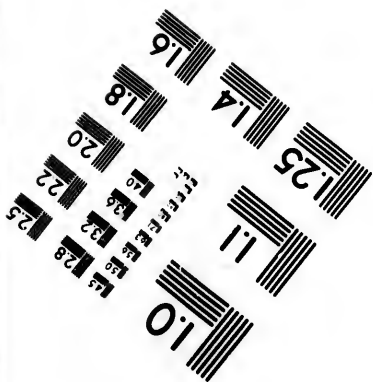
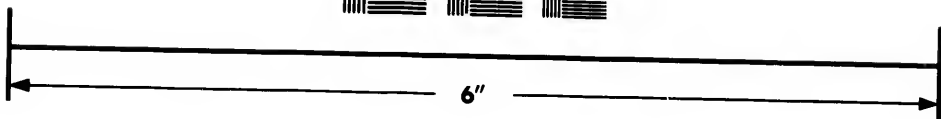
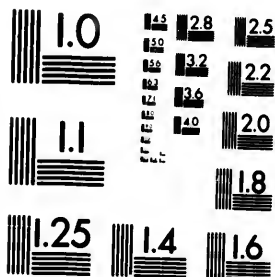


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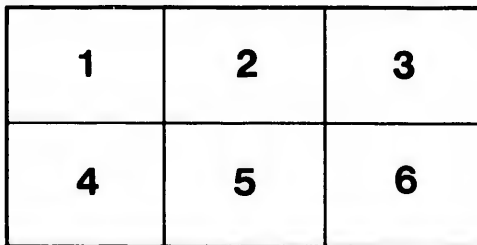
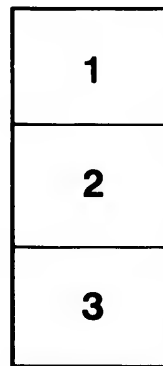
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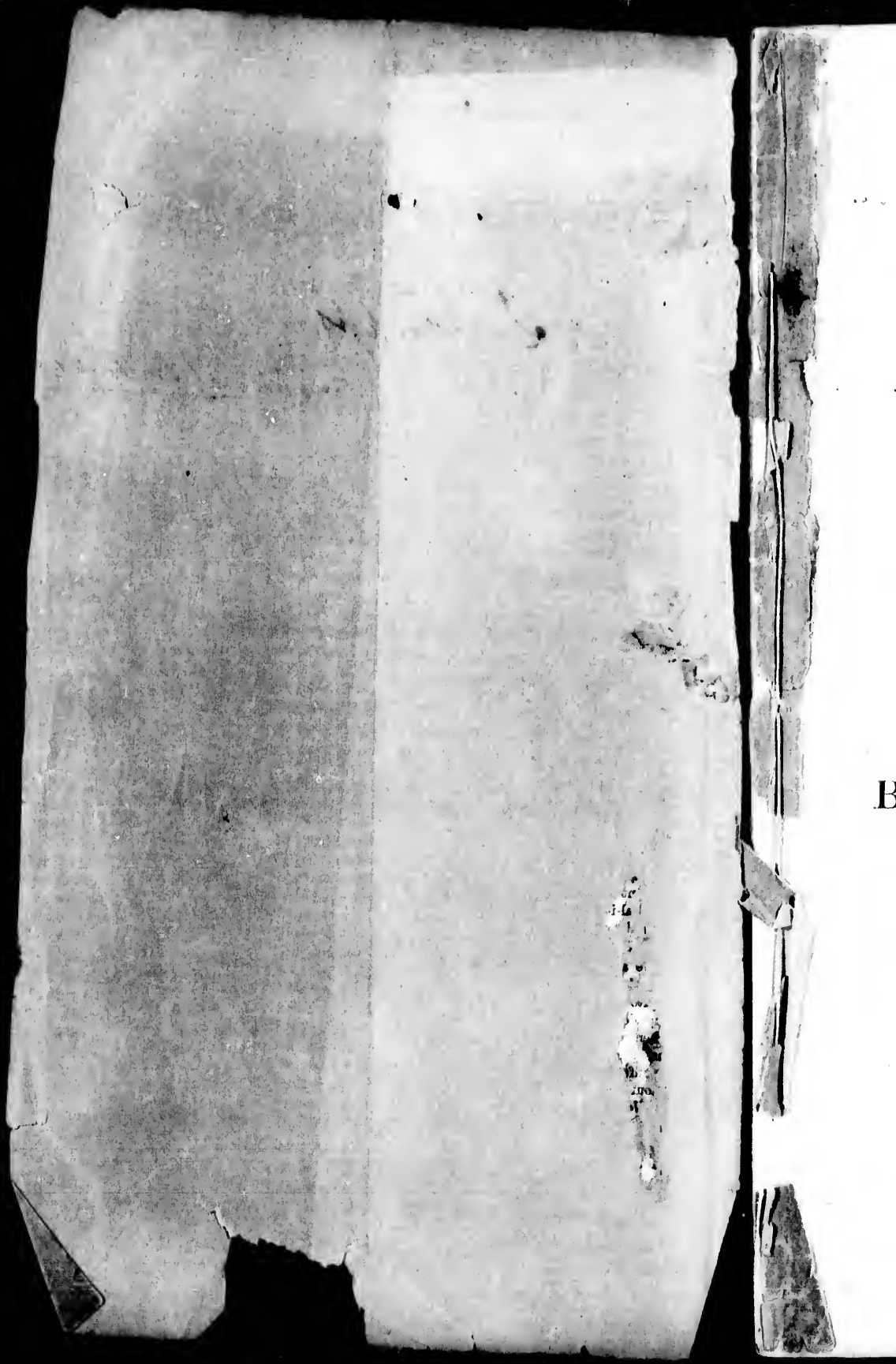
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THE
UNDEVELOPED NORTHERN PORTION
OF THE
AMERICAN CONTINENT.

A LECTURE

DELIVERED IN THE COURSE

BEFORE

BELL'S COMMERCIAL COLLEGE

FEBRUARY, 1856,

BY

J. L. SCRIPPS.

CHICAGO:

"DEMOCRATIC PRESS" STEAM PRINTING HOUSE, 45 CLARK STREET.

1856.

CHICAGO, March 1, 1856

J. L. Scripps, Esq., Editor Daily Democratic Press:

DEAR SIR:—The undersigned, believing that your excellent lecture, delivered in the course before Bell's Commercial College, on "The Undeveloped Northern Portion of the American Continent," contains statements and facts concerning this region of great public interest, especially to our Western community, would respectfully solicit its publication, as a means of extending the valuable information it embodies.

W. B. Ogden,

Thos. Richmond,

J. H. Dunham,

S. S. Hayes,

J. Young Scammon, H. T. Dickey,

R. K. Swift,

W. H. Brown,

Mark Skinner,

M. D. Ogden.

THE UNDEVELOPED
NORTHERN PORTION
OF
THE AMERICAN CONTINENT.

BY J. L. SCRIPPS.

During the summer of 1855 I visited the Lake Superior country. Passing, for the first time, from the rich alluvions and the deciduous flora which rest upon the carboniferous rocks of the Valley of the Mississippi, into a region of trap and of granite, where the old volcanic action had left its marks of force and of fire in bold upheavals, in great mural escarpments, in huge metallic veins driven upwards to the surface through rocky fissures, and where the spray of innumerable cascades touched with a fresher beauty the perennial verdure of the stately pine—it was very natural that I should conceive a sudden, an almost enthusiastic, interest in a country thus abounding in forms of beauty and of grandeur which to me were entirely new. But when I came to consider the influence upon the destiny of our country—upon our civilization and our political institutions—which must follow the settlement and development of the vast territory lying between the parallel of latitude on which we are situated and the farthest habitable limit northward, and between Labrador and Canada on the east, and the Russian Possessions on the west, that interest assumed a greater intensity—a still more absorbing character.

After my return home I betook myself to the study of this *terra incognita*. I was surprised to find, notwithstanding it has heretofore attracted scarcely any of the public attention, and even the well-informed and cultivated classes rest in almost total ignorance of its character and resources, that nevertheless much, comparatively, had been written descriptive of it by a few intrepid men who, combining the qualities of trader and explorer, had penetrated its wildernesses, crossed its mountain ranges, rambled beside its water courses, furrowed with their bark canoes the placid bosom of its innumerable lakes, and

struck hands with the nomadic bands of Indians that inhabit it.

It was when in the midst of these studies that I was solicited to contribute to the course of "home lectures," for which the public are indebted to the liberality of our esteemed fellow-citizen, Judge Bell, and being so deeply interested in the subject myself, I thought I could not select a theme for an hour's discourse more likely to command the attention of a Chicago audience than the country lying to the northward and westward of us, and which, for all time to come, must bear a most intimate relation to our city. If, thought I, we listen with rapt delight to lectures upon Egypt and India, upon China, Japan and Loo-Choo—countries around upon the other hemisphere—surely we cannot be wholly indifferent to information respecting a country lying just beyond our visual horizon, a part of which is ours by inheritance, the remainder of which is maturing, like fruit in autumn, to fall into our expectant lap, and all of which, whether it become ours or not, must contribute to the greatness and wealth of our city through the coming centuries. Whether in this I judged correctly or not, will be for you to determine after you shall have listened to such facts and relations as I may condense into the brief time allotted to a public discourse. But whatever may be your verdict on my effort to satisfy your expectations, of this I shall ever rest assured, that an intensely powerful interest lies in the subject whether I shall succeed in eliciting it in any degree or not.

THE SUBJECT DEFINED.

With this much by way of introduction, I proceed to the consideration of the subject. And first I will clearly define the region of country which it is proposed to pass in review. If we draw a line on the map from the eastern ex-

treme of Lake Superior northward it will strike the southernmost sweep of Hudson's Bay. We take this line as the eastern boundary, the Pacific Ocean as the western, and the Arctic or frozen Ocean as the northern boundary of the country marked out for consideration. The southern boundary is less clearly defined by natural land-marks. The tide of civilized population, in its movement westward, checked in its progress by the great chain of Northwestern lakes, fell off to the southward, settling thither shores of those inland seas, until arriving at the southern extreme of Lake Michigan it separated into two streams—one of which, curving sharply northward, followed up the shore line of the lakes to the western extreme of Lake Superior, in latitude 47° north—the other, progressing westward to the Mississippi, planted itself along that stream and its tributaries in Wisconsin and Minnesota, to very nearly the same parallel. Proceeding westward over extensive plains and by way of numerous lakes and water-courses, we again come to a civilized people, not drawn thither by the ordinary laws of emigration, but taken up bodily out of European communities by a giant monopoly for its own selfish purposes, and planted down in this Western Hemisphere, on the Red River of the North, in the midst of a great wilderness. These people are the product of a colony established there by Lord Selkirk, under the auspices of the Hudson Bay Company, as early as 1811. As settlement increased in population it extended along the banks of the Red River from near the 48th to the 56th parallel of north latitude. Continuing westward through Minnesota and Nebraska we shall find no other settlements, except towards the southern portions of those territories, until we cross the Rocky Mountains, where we again discern a northern movement of population planting itself upon the Pacific coast, around Admiralty Inlet and Puget Sound, along the Straits of Fuca and the Gulf of Georgia, up to our extreme northern boundary; and passing up the coast through the intervening British Possessions, we come again upon settlements in Russian America.

THE FUR COMPANIES.

A historical interest attaches to the country embraced within the boundaries thus designated. For nearly two centuries it has been the field of operations of the Hudson Bay Company, and for a portion of that period of French traders, also, from Canada, who were followed, after the cession of Canada to the British crown, by a much shrewder and keener class of men of Scotch descent. At a later period the American Fur Company, through its agents, entered the country south of our national boundary to contest the prize of the valuable commerce of this extended wilderness. The history of the Fur Trade upon the American continent has yet to be written. It is a field of rare interest, abounding in romantic and thrilling incident, and singularly attractive in that it unfolds the effects resulting from a frequent collision of civilization and barbarism out in the wilderness, with no restraints of civil law or of public opinion to temper or control the insatiable greed of gain which characterized the one, and with no higher power than those traits of native nobleness which sometimes are seen breaking through the environments of barbarism, to stay the impulses of savage ferocity on the part of the other. With such a tempting field as this, inviting both the pen and the pencil, it surely will not be long before those who are capable of occupying it worthily will be induced to enter upon it.

About the year 1607 Henry Hudson, an English navigator, discovered the Bay which bears his name. A few years subsequent to this, settlements had been established upon the waters of the Bay by enterprising English traders for the purpose of engaging in traffic with the neighboring Indians. The French in Canada becoming aware of these operations resolved to contest the ground with the English traders. In 1656, precisely 200 years ago, the latter first appeared in the vicinity of the English settlements, and ill-blood between the two parties was speedily engendered: About 1660 two vessels, equipped at Quebec, proceeded to Hudson's Bay, and the parties concerned in the expedition erected a few forts upon their arrival; and from thence, until the ratification of the treaty of Utrecht, the operations of the two parties were conducted amid perpetual strife and frequent bloodshed. But the contest between these rival traders had not continued a great while

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before a powerful company was organized in England with men and money sufficient to secure it in its possessions beyond the right it sought to exercise under the grant to Prince Rupert; the former on the right of contingency which has befallen it down to the present time. This was the Hudson Bay Company—it being held by the French that New COMPANY. Its origin dates back to 1669, when Charles the II granted by royal charter to his cousin, *Prince Rupert*, and to several other English Noblemen, all that portion of North America bounded west by the Pacific Ocean and the South by an imaginary line running up the St. Lawrence; and through the great Lakes towards the setting sun. It is interesting to observe how very low an estimate those early English monarchs placed upon the dependencies of the crown in America. Here was a free grant of over three millions of square miles of Territory, all of it rich in furs and fish, much of it in soil, in mineral, in navigable streams, in valuable forests—a territory in one of the prairies of which "the fast anchored Isle" itself might have been lost; and the charter was so carefully drawn that it secured to the grantees this stupendous territorial manor in perpetuity, and an exclusive right of trade within it forever. Of late the legality of the franchise has been denied, but so powerful is the company at home, so great its influence through its vast wealth and through its members and connections, that the question has never yet been brought before the courts for adjudication. In those days, too, geographical knowledge was very limited and imperfect. The idea of a Northwestern Passage to the Pacific possessed the minds of the cultivated classes, and the probable discovery of such a passage through the waters flowing into Hudson's Bay was made one of the ostensible grounds on which the grant was issued to Prince Rupert and his associates. Undoubtedly there were political and family reasons at the basis of this charter, but the King had sufficient prudence not to thrust them upon the attention of his subjects.

Organized upon this charter, the Hudson Bay Company has maintained an active and profitable existence for nearly two centuries. Enthroned in solitary grandeur, for most of the time, in the frozen North, it soon grew into a despotism more gain, and an indomitable perseverance and energetic than the climate. Its imperious edicts have always been the sole law of its numerous servants, and it has ruled with equal determination the Indian tribes which have contributed to its wealth.

The French traders from Canada, after they were driven from Hudson's Bay by their more powerful rival, sought a new channel of trade by way of the Lakes with the same country over

which the Hudson Bay Company was endeavoring to extend its operations. The latter claiming the right it sought to exercise under the grant to Prince Rupert; the former on the right of contingency which has befallen it down to the present time. This was the Hudson Bay Company—it being held by the French that New COMPANY. Its origin dates back to 1669, when Charles the II granted by royal charter to his cousin, *Prince Rupert*, and to several other English Noblemen, all that portion of North America bounded west by the Pacific Ocean and the South by an imaginary line running up the St. Lawrence; and through the great Lakes towards the setting sun. It is interesting to observe how very low an estimate those early English monarchs placed upon the dependencies of the crown in America. Here was a free grant of over three millions of square miles of Territory, all of it rich in furs and fish, much of it in soil, in mineral, in navigable streams, in valuable forests—a territory in one of the prairies of which "the fast anchored Isle" itself might have been lost; and the charter was so carefully drawn that it secured to the grantees this stupendous territorial manor in perpetuity, and an exclusive right of trade within it forever. Of late the legality of the franchise has been denied, but so powerful is the company at home, so great its influence through its vast wealth and through its members and connections, that the question has never yet been brought before the courts for adjudication. In those days, too, geographical knowledge was very limited and imperfect. The idea of a Northwestern Passage to the Pacific possessed the minds of the cultivated classes, and the probable discovery of such a passage through the waters flowing into Hudson's Bay was made one of the ostensible grounds on which the grant was issued to Prince Rupert and his associates. Undoubtedly there were political and family reasons at the basis of this charter, but the King had sufficient prudence not to thrust them upon the attention of his subjects.

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But the members of the Hudson Bay Company had scarcely more than congratulated themselves upon this withdrawal of their ancient rivals, before another class of traders took their place. As nearly as I have been able to ascertain from the authorities which I have consulted, the first appearance of the conquerors of Canada upon the waters of Lake Superior in the capacity of traders was in 1766—three years after the cession of the country by France. These traders were mostly of Scotch origin. To a shrewdness in business, which is proverbial of the Scotch people, they united an enterprise, a boldness in pursuit of gain, and an indomitable perseverance and energetic before which all obstacles melted away. These Scotchmen from Canada entered single-handed upon the broad field, in direct competition with the powerful company of the North. Individual enterprise opened the way and carried these bold, energetic men as far westward as the French had penetrated, and even further northward towards the principal seat of the Hudson Bay Company than their predecessors had ven-

See the contest about the Hudson's Bay Co. in the History of the Northwest
 See the foundation of the Hudson's Bay Co. in the History of the Northwest
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 See the foundation of the Hudson's Bay Co. in the History of the Northwest

were to go. But circumstances soon conspired to drive them into an association of capital and of effort. The English, finding them more dangerous rivals than the French had been, became suddenly conscious of the danger of losing the best portion of the trade of which they had expected to enjoy the entire monopoly, and commenced pushing out their posts to the south and the west, following but never leading the Scotch Canadians into whatever portion of the country the latter ventured to penetrate. The contest was an unequal one. On one side stood a powerful Company, with wealth, with men trained in its service who knew no law save such as their imperious masters dictated, with a great greed for gain, viewing the whole country as legitimately and legally their peculiar domain, and from which they would be justified in expelling all intruders; on the other, a few individuals, with separate interests, without concert of action or combination of effort, with no civil law to back them, or compel restitution when force and injustice had deprived them of their rights. To make the situation of the latter still worse, a frequent recurrence of rivalry and competition took place among themselves, whereby they were less able to meet the systematic attempt of their organized rivals to drive them from the country.

These circumstances were instrumental in originating a powerful organization in Canada, under the style of the Northwest Company, in the winter of 1783-4. From that date down to 1821—a period of nearly half a century—a commercial rivalry, fiercer perhaps than any that has ever been witnessed in civilized communities, animated the two companies, and wheresoever, throughout the Northwestern wilderness, these two parties made their appearance, there human ingenuity, a native shrewdness rendered preternaturally acute by the emergencies of time and place, an individual courage nurtured by constant familiarity with danger, were all employed in carrying forward the plans of the one and in thwarting those of the other, with but little reference to the agencies made use of to accomplish the object. Time will not permit me to give even an outline of this prolonged contest. Let it suffice on this head to say, that after a sanguinary battle between the servants of the two companies, at the settlement of Lord Selkirk, on the Red River of the North—an engagement in which the Governor of the Colony, Mr. Semple, and seventeen of his followers were killed and the remainder put to flight by the Northwesterns—and after Lord Selkirk, by way of retaliation, had captured Fort William, the principal depot of the Northwestern Company near the head of Lake Superior,

the whole subject was brought before Parliament and resulted in a compromise by which the two companies were united under the title of "HONORABLE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY," since which time the only competition met with has come from the American Fur Company, whose operations have been conducted south of the parallel of 49 North latitude.

The magnitude of the operations of these two companies was enormous. From a work entitled Mackenzie's Voyages, published in London in 1801, we learn something of the business of the Northwestern Company in the earlier period of its existence. In 1788—four years after its organization—the gross value of the adventure of the year amounted to \$200,000. In 1795 it had reached more than \$600,000, and afterwards a still larger sum. In reading this book I was forcibly reminded of the wonderful improvement in facilities of transit, both in navigation and land carriage, which have come into general use since it was written. Here is an example of the slow process of that day:

The agents of the company stationed in the Northwest sent their orders for goods to Montreal in October. These orders were forwarded to London, and the goods were shipped the next spring, arriving at Montreal in the summer. In course of the following winter they were made up into such articles as were wanted for the Indians; they were then put up into packages of ninety pounds each, and shipped from Montreal in canoes in the month of May. The canoes thus loaded proceeded up the Ottawa River, crossed over to Lake Nipissing, descended French River into Lake Huron, then up the St. Mary's River, and coasting around Lake Superior arrived at Grand Portage, near the head of the lake. Thence they were conveyed by way of the Kaministiquie River, Lake La Pluie, or Rainy Lake, and Rainy Lake River, Lake of the Woods, Lake Winnipeg, the Saskatchewan River, and so on across to Great Slave Lake, the Athabasca country and the Rocky Mountains, arriving at their destination early in the winter, just two years after the order had been sent for them. That winter these goods were exchanged for furs and peltries, which were sent off the ensuing spring, arriving at Montreal in the fall. From thence they were sent to Europe and sold, and the returns received at Montreal the following June—just forty-two months after the goods were ordered, thirty-six months after they had been shipped from England and twenty four months after they had been forwarded from Montreal. The world has moved forward some since that period, and it is easy to see how a "nimble sixpence" of the present day, when an enterprising trader may turn over his capital five or six times in twelve months, is

more productive than the "slow shilling" of that time.

The Hudson Bay Company's operations were conducted on a scale of similar magnitude to that of its great rival. Its supplies, however, were received from Europe by way of Hudson's Bay, and its furs were shipped by the same course. Starting from its forts on this great estuary, the company's servants penetrated the same region of country already spoken of as occupied by the Northwestern. If the latter pioneered the way in every instance, the former pressed hard upon their footsteps, nor left them for any considerable time in the undisputed enjoyment of the trade of new regions. Thus, from the great Lakes on the east to Puget's Sound and the Russian Possessions on the west, and from the regions of the Esquimaux on the north to the Gulf of California at the south, have the agents of these companies traversed the country in every direction—crossing the continent with a fleet of bark canoes laden with goods for the Indians or with furs for Europe—making, with few and short portages, the entire distance from Puget's Sound to Montreal, or to Hudson's Bay, through a connected chain of rivers and lakes—on every water course within the boundaries designated, on every Indian trail, in every mountain gorge, on every plain, and in every forest, have the servants of these two companies appeared, stopping wherever the ascending smoke marked the presence of the natives, and bartering the products of European looms—the scarlet cloth, the flaunting print and ribbon, the tinselled ornaments and flashing gewgaw, so attractive to barbaric life—for the rich furs of the north, destined in their turn to minister no less to the vanity of those who dwell in the centres of civilization.

Connected with these long-continued and widely extended operations are incidents of romance, of courage and of daring, of endurance almost superhuman, of deeds of blood fit to appal the stoutest heart. All these are to be gathered up and embalmed in history, but the time is not yet. Some of them I had thought to present in my present discourse, but the subject has so grown upon my hands that I cannot.

The matter of the Hudson Bay Company possesses a special interest just now from the fact that President Pierce in his recent Message advises the purchase of its rights and property in Oregon and Washington Territories. It is understood that the company is anxious to sell. Its trade in furs is nearly closed in those Territories, and in the limited mercantile operations which it conducts there, whether in furs or other commodities, it comes in direct competition with the inevitable Yankee, whose motto is "quick

returns and a small margin for profits." There can be little doubt but that the sole reason why the company maintains its posts in Oregon and Washington is to induce brother Jonathan to "shell out" liberally for them. My own opinion is, that brother Jonathan will let the company hold these posts until it voluntarily abandons them, unless, indeed, it will sell along with them the original charter to Prince Rupert. Jonathan would undoubtedly "come down" handsomely for that, without stopping to scrutinize very closely its legality.

INHABITANTS OF THE COUNTRY.

I come next to speak of the population of the country under consideration. And first, as to the number of whites employed by the fur companies who reside permanently in the country. It is probable that two thousand would be a liberal estimate for this class. To their character and mode of life I have already made incidental allusion in speaking of the operations of the companies. Time will not permit me to say more on that head.

In the next place, wherever the various companies have established trading posts, a portion of their servants have intermarried with the Indian tribes. I have no satisfactory data by which to estimate the entire population of mixed blood. When Schoolcraft was sent out by the Government in 1822, to visit the tribes inhabiting the country around Lake Superior and on the head waters of the Mississippi, he found in those localities a total Indian population of 14,020, of whom 1,533 were of mixed blood, or a little more than one-tenth of the whole number. Further out in the interior the proportion is not nearly so great, though this class is to be found in considerable number throughout the whole area covered by the posts of the traders.

The Indians of the country are divided into many tribes, and are mainly comprised in the following :

The Ojibways, the Sioux or Dacotahs, the Muskeegoose, the Crees, the Knistenaux, the Assiniboins, the Piegans, the Surcies, the Blood Indians, the Blackfeet, the Flatheads, the Sauteaux, the Chepewyan, the Beaver, the Dog Rib, the Strongbow Indians and the Esquimaux. These numerous tribes are undoubtedly the offshoots of about four distinct nations, or people, and may all be classified under the heads of the Algonquins, the Dacotahs, the Chepewyan and the Esquimaux. I estimate their entire number at about one hundred thousand souls. It should be remembered that the Indian population of the included region was formerly much greater than now. Various causes have contributed to a diminution of their number. First, the perpetual

state of war which exists between many of the tribes. Secondly, the introduction of ardent spirits, but incidentally religions and other inspirations by the fur companies; for notwithstanding the organic law of both the Hudson Bay and the Northwestern Companies prohibited traffic in ardent spirits, and notwithstanding the American Fur Company was prohibited by special act of Congress from selling or giving it to the Indians, still the fierce rivalry existing between these companies, combined with the known fact that the Indians would trade with that party which would furnish them the most rum, led to an open and shameless disregard of the law, and with the direst results to the Indians. But the chief agency by which these tribes have been cut down to a mere tithe of their original number was the small-pox, introduced among them by their intercourse with the traders. The different authors which I have examined upon the subject are at a loss for language to depict the scenes of horror, of devastation—the utter annihilation of whole families, and sometimes of tribes—which followed upon the breaking out of this disease among the Indians. On its appearance among some bands, a general dispersion would take place, and the disease would thus be spread to neighboring bands. Others remained moodily where the disease first attacked them, awaiting with Indian composure and stoicism a fate which they regarded as inevitable. And still others, shrinking from the fearful agony of the disease, upon its first appearance in their lodges, would call their families around them, and exhort their women and children to avoid it by a self-inflicted death—the hand of the husband and father coming to the assistance of those who faltered, after which he would close the scene by putting an end to his own life. Such are some of the accounts we have of the effects of this terrible malady among the Northwestern Indians.

As to the moral and mental condition of these tribes but little can be said that would be pleasant to hear. It was part of the policy of the French traders to establish missions among all the tribes with which they traded. Such missions were planted at the Saut St. Mary, at La Pointe, at Grand Portage, and as far west as the Lake of the Woods, almost two centuries ago, and were maintained up to the cession of Canada in 1763. But when the Scotch traders went into the country three years afterwards, with the exception of some old French trappers who had married Indian wives and still remained, they found no one who appeared to have the slightest idea of Christianity. The Hudson Bay Company has generally kept up the forms of the Christian religion at its principal trading posts; and in some instances has maintained schools

chiefly for the benefit of the families of its agents. But throughout its vast domain, so far as man may judge, no serious efforts to Christianize an uncivilized people remain to this day without fruit—except in two or three instances in which agriculture and some other pursuits of civilized life have been taught them also. The American Fur Company, I believe, has never made missionary labors a part of its objects. The Yankee traders were famous among the Indians for mixing their rum with water—but I believe they have never secured much of a reputation, either in the woods or among civilized people, for mixing business with religion. When he preaches, he preaches mainly to his own advantage; when he preaches, he preaches. Yet American missionaries have followed close upon the footsteps of the American Fur Company, and while they have accomplished more than their French and English predecessors, still it is painfully apparent that missionary effort among these northern Indians is a Sisyphtian labor.

There is one remarkable instance, however, in which these labors have been crowned with success. This is a settlement of about five hundred Cree Indians, on the Red River of the North, a short distance below the Selkirk Colony. David Dale Owen, the eminent Geologist, visited this settlement of Indians in 1848, and I have copied from his official report to Government the following account of them:

“They are decidedly the most civilized tribe which I have seen or heard of in the North. They support themselves mainly by the produce of their farms which they cultivate with their own hands. They dwell in comfortable square-log buildings, erected, thatched and whitewashed by themselves. They are acquainted with the use of the simple farming utensils, and the mechanical operations necessary to keep their farms and houses in order. Each family cultivates from five to ten acres of land which is kept well fenced. They mow their own hay, and feed their cattle on it in winter. A few occasionally hunt during a month or more in the summer when their crops do not require much attention, but this is more for recreation than support.

“The remarkable change in the manners and customs of these people has been wrought mainly through the force of example, by Mr. Smithurst, who resides among them as Missionary. That gentleman is remarkable for his love of order and arrangement, and is devoted to Agriculture and Horticulture. His house is situated in the midst of a delightful flower-garden, kept in beautiful order, with flourishing fields of grain and meadows in the rear. The Indians having continually before their eyes so pleasing and practical an example of the comforts of civilized life, as well as an illustration of the means by which they may be enabled to provide a support far more stable and certain than that derived from the chase, have gradually fallen into the habits of their instructor, and by degrees have gathered around their permanent homes, the implements and appurtenances, and even some of the comforts and luxuries.

belonging to the establishment of the thrifty farmer. Sometimes they are accosted contemptuously by their neighbors, the Chippewas, and ridiculed as "earth-troims" and "grubs;" but they now retort upon them; "Wait till the winter sets in, and then you will come to us, beggars for our refuse potatoes and indifferent peas."

THE COUNTRY.

Passing from the population, let us consider now the country itself. And herein are we, as citizens of Chicago, deeply interested. For if there be to the Northward and Westward of us a country capable of sustaining large and flourishing communities, whether of agriculturists, miners or manufacturers, those communities must forever hold relations of the most intimate character with us. Nature, by the interposition of the great chain of lakes which stretches Northward of us through seven degrees of latitude and to within two degrees of the southern limits of Hudson's Bay, has made our city the inevitable gateway to and from this country. Situated as it is upon the head waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and within striking distance of the navigable waters falling into the Gulf of Mexico, and having both railway and water communication with the latter, Chicago holds a position which enables her to collect within her storehouses the products of all the zones, and here they will meet and be exchanged for whatever Nature, Industry and Art may produce in the higher latitudes above us. It becomes a subject therefore of no little interest, to understand what this country holds in store for its future occupants, and what inducements it presents to secure early settlement. In considering the matter of soil, climate, water, minerals, &c., I think I shall be able to dispel some erroneous impressions that prevail respecting it, as well as to present some facts and considerations not generally known to the public.

LAKES AND WATER-COURSES.

One of the most notable features of the country under consideration is the great multiplicity of lakes and water-courses with which it is furnished. It contains within it the water-sheds from which nearly all the great river systems of the continent, west of those which flow from the slopes of the Alleghanies, derive their sources. If we make the western extreme of Lake Superior our starting point for a general view under this head, we shall find, after passing westward a short distance, a grand water-shed comprising many hundred square miles of area in which the following rivers, beside several others, have their sources. First, the St. Louis River flowing into Lake Superior and seeking an outlet to the ocean through the River and Gulf of St. Lawrence. This stream may in fact be regarded as the head waters of the St. Lawrence. Secondly,

the Mississippi and a large number of its tributaries, such as the Chippeway, the Crow-Wing, the Minnesota, the St. Croix and others—flowing into the Gulf of Mexico. Thirdly, the Red River of the North and its tributaries, flowing into Lake Winnipeg, which lake discharges through the Nelson and Severn Rivers into Hudson's Bay. This grand water-shed, unlike all others on the continent which give rise to important river systems, is remarkable for being situated upon a vast plateau, instead of occupying a mountainous region. The sources of all the rivers which I have named are reached by a gentle ascent—just sufficient to promote drainage of the country and start the several streams upon their long journey.

Proceeding westward on nearly the same parallel of latitude we come upon another grand water shed situated among the mountains. From the peaks and spurs of the Rocky, the Creur d'Alene and the Cascade Mountains trickle down a thousand little rivulets which, collecting themselves in the deep gorges and canons, and receiving constant accessions to their volume, after much apparent fretting and foaming in surmounting the rocky barriers piled in their way, emerge finally upon the plains—some on the thither side, some on the hither side of the mountains—a half dozen or more grand rivers, running in as many different directions. On the Northern confines of this water-shed the Columbian, the Frazier and the Athabasca Rivers have their sources, the two former discharging into the Pacific, and the latter into Slave Lake, which lake has its outlet in the Arctic Ocean through Mackenzie's River. A little further south the Saskatchewan River, which discharges through Lake Winnipeg into Hudson Bay, takes its rise. Still further southward the Missouri, with its principal tributary, the Yellow Stone, and the Rio Colorado—the former flowing into the Gulf of Mexico, the latter into the Gulf of California, collect their head waters.

The concurrence of these two great water-sheds, with several others of a minor character, from which descend the chief rivers of the continent in every direction to the ocean, within the territory under consideration, most admirably fitted it for the operations of the powerful companies which have so long occupied it. By means of the ten thousand lakes, which occupy the first plateau, and which, in fact, are scattered freely all over the Northern portion of the continent that is not mountainous—by means of the great rivers of the two systems and their innumerable tributaries interlocking with each other on the plains and among the mountains, breaking down the barriers of the the latter into an easy open pathway, a thousand lines of water

communication suitable for canoe navigation was opened from the principal trading posts with every portion of the country. Occasionally the brigade of canoes would come to an impassable rapid or waterfall; but the hardy voyageurs regarded such an obstruction of but small moment. The goods or furs constituting the cargo were made up in packages of ninety pounds each, from three to six of which, in proportion to the length of the portage, were usually a load for a single person; taking this load upon their backs, confining it there with a broad strap brought forward and passed over the forehead, detailing two to share the burden of each canoe, they would move off on a free lope, rarely slackening their pace until arrived at the point of reëmbarking. In the same manner portages were made from the head waters of one stream to the nearest point on those of another—continuing onward by the most direct route until the proposed destination was gained. It is a curious fact, and one which I presume is known to but very few, that there are numerous routes of water communication, with occasional portages from twenty yards (sometimes) ten miles in length, through the country we are considering, from the Great Lakes and from Hudson's Bay across the continent to the Pacific Ocean. Instances are upon record in which persons have passed from Montreal to the mouth of the Columbia River, and *vice versa*, with merchandise or with furs, making the entire distance in the same bark canoe.

Some of these rivers are navigable for a much more pretending class of boats than the bark canoe of the Fur traders. The Minnesota, the St. Croix, the Crow Wing and the Blue Earth, tributaries of the Mississippi, have all, I believe, had their capacity for steamboat navigation tested. The Red River of the North is capable of steamboat navigation for four hundred miles. So the Saskatchewan, the Assiniboine, the Athabasca, the Mackenzie, and perhaps other rivers of which I have not the data to warrant me in speaking definitely, have likewise a sufficient depth of water for steamboat navigation. In some of these water-courses a great many rapids, and sometimes considerable cataracts, occur, suggestive of the manufacturing establishments that will sooner or later derive from them the motive power to propel their machinery. Many of the lakes are also navigable, some of them for the larger class of vessels. We not unfrequently find mention of those which are from ten to thirty miles in extent. There are two of very remarkable size. Are my audience prepared to hear, that not more than two hundred and fifty, or three hundred, miles northwest of Lake Superior there is a lake of nearly, if not

quite, equal dimensions of Lake Michigan? It is no impeachment of their general intelligence to suppose most of them are not. Yet such a lake has an existence. FRANCHERE, whose narrative of a trip from the mouth of the Columbia River to Montreal, in 1814, possesses much interest, says of Lake Winnipeg—the lake to which I allude—that “it visibly yields in extent only to Lake Superior and the great Slave Lake.” Its southern extreme is on the parallel of 51°. *Lake of the Woods* is also a large body of water, being nearly half the size of Lake Ontario. It receives its name from the large number of islands within it, which are covered with a luxuriant growth of forest trees. It forms part of the boundary line between the United States and the British possessions. Without attempting to particularize further, let me close this branch of the subject by saying, that the region of country embraced between latitude 46° north and the 60th parallel, and between Hudson's Bay and Lake Superior on the east, and the Pacific Ocean on the west, is better watered throughout its entire extent than any other equal portion of the world. So numerous indeed are the streams and lakes that, according to Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who spent eight years in that country as Chief Superintendent of the Northwest Company, the place was of rare occurrence from which a person setting out and proceeding in a direct line for eight or ten miles would not come upon one or the other.

These streams and lakes abound in fish of the finest quality. Both the Indians and the Fur-Traders rely much upon them for the means of subsistence. It is a singular fact, that all the great sea-fisheries are in the North. Not that fish are not abundant within the tropics, but because those taken in high latitudes, or in the cold currents which sweep down from the Poles toward the Equator, are far superior in quality to the fish of the tropics or those found in the thermal currents setting Northward. Lieutenant Maury, in his *Physical Geography of the Sea*, gives numerous illustrations of this fact. The same conditions appear to govern the quality of the fish in our Northwestern lakes. The Mackinaw trout are famous for their fine quality beyond those taken from Lake Michigan in the latitude of Chicago. The fish of Lake Huron are superior to those of either Lake Erie or Michigan; while the fish of Lake Superior are esteemed by epicures of far more delicate flavor than those of Lake Huron. By analogy, therefore, we should be warranted in asserting the superior quality of the fish which are found in the lakes and rivers of the high northern latitudes in which the subject of this discourse is situated; while the uniform declarations of independent explorers and

of the Fur-Traders, establish the correctness of the analogy.

SOIL.

But water, although an essential element, does not, of itself, make a country desirable for residence. Other considerations, as, for example, of soil, of fuel, of minerals, and of climate, must also be taken into the account to determine the question. But before entering upon these topics, let us take a brief survey of the extent of so much of this country as I hold to be well adapted to the occupation of a civilized people. Our own government, it will be remembered, once claimed up to $54^{\circ} 40'$, but finally "backed down" to 49° . On whatever side justice may have been, I cannot help thinking that, had our statesmen entertained any correct idea of the country between the parallels of 49° and $54^{\circ} 40'$, the subject would have remained much longer under discussion, and our present possessions, in all probability, would extend north of the boundary finally agreed upon. Taking the facts as we find them, the undeveloped area between latitude 46° and 49° , west of the lakes, comprises 357,000 square miles, or sufficient territory to make six and a half States of the size of Illinois. The undeveloped area of the British Possessions west of Lake Superior and Hudson's Bay, comprises 1,375,200 square miles—or sufficient territory to make twenty-five States equal in size to Illinois. Our own and the habitable portion of the British Possessions together are, therefore, more than thirty-one times larger than the State of Illinois. This computation carries us up to the 60th parallel of north latitude. Considering the extreme severity of the present season, it will probably occur to some of my audience that *that* is pushing the subject to an unreasonable extreme, but from causes that I shall mention presently, when I come to speak of the climatology of the country, I shall be able to show that, in a very large section of the country, the temperature at the 60th parallel is quite endurable, if not positively agreeable.

It is the popular idea concerning this vast region of country, that it is "a waste howling wilderness," abounding in sandy plains, and everywhere unadapted to cultivation, both on account of its poor soil and its high latitude. But this is a mistake, as I shall show. It is quite natural however, that such notions should prevail respecting it. The fur companies that have occupied it have always been opposed to its settlement. The presence of civilization in any portion of it would put an immediate end to the business of these companies within the district thus occupied. It was essential, therefore, to maintain the undisturbed possession of it to the Indian tribes which were found within it. There were two ways by which this might be done. The

first was to maintain a constant silence respecting it; the other, to spread reports prejudicial to it. Each of these plans has, in its turn, been acted upon. Almost all the knowledge that is available to the public concerning the country came through these interested sources. Moreover, had the fur companies been inclined to report the country correctly, the fact that their line of travel was along the water courses and only occasionally passing across small portions of the country, from one stream to another, rendered it impossible for them to obtain full and accurate knowledge of it themselves. It is curious to observe, also, what erroneous impressions the early explorers and first settlers of a country form of it. I very well remember when the opinion was universal that the great prairies of Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Northern Missouri would never be settled save small strips of them, around the edges, in the vicinity of wood and water. I can well remember when the opinion prevailed extensively that the country upon the head waters of the Missouri and of the Mississippi were adapted only for the abode of uncivilized man. The first Americans who went into California in search of gold, reported the country as entirely unadapted to agricultural pursuits. We have lived to see all these ideas exploded. The immense prairies of the west are now justly regarded as the garden of the world. Immigration has poured up the Mississippi and its highest tributaries, almost to Lake Itasca, the source of that great river; a similar current is setting into Nebraska and Kansas and stretching away over the immense plains that border the Missouri. While California, the country so recently thought to be entirely unfit for agriculture, besides growing enough to support its own population, exported to New York and other places during last year nearly half a million bushels of wheat. Now, when I come before you this evening, and lay down the proposition, that a very large portion of the vast region lying between the 46th and 60th parallels of latitude, and between the Lakes and the Pacific, is susceptible of a profitable cultivation, that it is eminently adapted to manufactures by reason of its vast resources of water power, that large sections of it are rich in valuable minerals—and all this, too, in the face of current opinions directly to the contrary, I would have you bear in mind the interested sources from which these opinions originated, as well as the fact that very similar opinions formerly prevailed of portions of our own State and other parts of the country which are now considered as among the most desirable portions of the Union.

Now let us see for a moment what facts can be adduced, even in the present imperfect state of

our knowledge of the country, in support of the proposition just laid down. And in doing so, I will commence at the eastern limit and progress westward. The country bordering upon Lake Superior has become widely famous for its mineral deposits and extensive mining operations. For a little while after population commenced flowing in, similar impressions prevailed respecting its agricultural capacities to those which the first American explorers of California entertained of that country. The country was supposed to be too mountainous and broken, too many rocks on the surface, the soil too thin, and the seasons too short. But subsequent experiment has proved that none of these conclusions were correct. The finest esculents in the world are grown in that region. The grasses flourish as if native to the soil. Oats are a sure and large crop. The more hardy varieties of Indian corn succeed well. Add to this, that the characteristics of the soil are such that crops require very little attention beside planting and harvesting. Wheat has been grown at different points on Lake Superior; but it is now thought that the snows immediately upon the coast and on the highlands of the coast range, are generally so deep that this crop would be smothered. But this is no drawback to the country, since the prairies of Wisconsin and Illinois are near enough at hand to supply the want. Further west the snows are not so deep, and an excellent quality of wheat is grown in Minnesota, as well as all the other articles I have enumerated.

In Northern Wisconsin there are occasional strips of poor land—of country almost destitute of soil—sandy and arid, made up mainly of the disintegration of the lower protozoic sandstones. There are also occasional districts in which the surface is nearly covered with huge boulders, and others in which a great multitude of lakes abound, having low banks and swampy margins. Mr. Owen, in his report of a Geological Survey of Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, advises Government not to incur the expense of surveying these marshy grounds. You will remember that this is precisely the advice which the first government surveyors sent out to Michigan gave respecting that State. A little drainage will make the Lake region thus contemptuously slurred over and dismissed by Mr. Owen, one of the most productive and most desirable districts in Wisconsin.

Respecting eastern Minnesota, I need scarcely say anything, for its agricultural capacities are now well known and appreciated. It will be sufficient on this head to read a brief extract from the *St. Paul Pioneer*, respecting the country lying between the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, of which but little has hitherto been known:

"The popular impression has been that the bulk of the fertile lands of the territory, are to be found in the river valleys, and that back of these there is no inducement for exploration or settlement. From reports continually reaching us we are satisfied that this is a great error. It is true that all our valleys—the Upper Mississippi, the Minnesota, the Cannon River, the Zumbro, and the Root River—are among the most beautiful in the world. Broad expanse of prairie, rolling and dotted with openings seemingly dotted by hand, so uniform and regular is their growth; with a soil of great depth and richness; and ribboned at convenient intervals with clear and rapid brooks and streams, which tumble over waterfalls, and contribute to the health, no less than to the rapid development of the sections which they beautify; these valleys, thus fashioned and adorned, would in themselves, make Minnesota flourishing and populous beyond any other portion of the West.

"The remaining portions of the Territory are not, as is generally supposed, either uncomely or barren. On the contrary, if we rely upon the statements of intelligent men, the high table lands which lie between our beautiful valleys, comprise qualities which must ultimately make them our prominent reliance for agricultural purposes. This is peculiarly true of the section lying between the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. A friend who lately took a trip some thirty miles back from Chaska, on the Minnesota, has given us glowing accounts of this section of country—beautiful rolling prairies, oak and maple openings, and forests covered with the largest and finest growth of timber to be found in the West. The soil, which he took occasion to examine at intervals averaged from three to four feet in depth, and "could not," as he expressed it, "have been bettered by Professor Mapes himself."

"Some twenty-five miles from Chaska, he was surprised by the sight of a large neat looking settlement, to which the name of Glencoe has been given. It is located in the centre of a charming prairie, and skirted around by highland and forests. Coal, in considerable abundance had been found there, and our friend saw a laborer throwing out with a spade flint particles, from a cellar which he was digging. The settlement was commenced last spring by a single family, and now every quarter section within a space of two miles square is "claimed" by actual settlers. On his return, he met between seventy and eighty men, with teams and packs, going into that vicinity for purposes of settlement. So rapidly and quietly is Minnesota filling up in every direction.

"The description given us by this gentleman, we are assured may be applied with equal truth to the great body of country lying between the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. It is a section of vast extent, large enough to form whole States of the New England size, and blessed with a soil strong and fertile enough to support the densest population."

Of the country lying to the northward of that thus described we have reason to believe that it is not of a very different character. When Mr. Schoolcraft in 1832 traced the Mississippi to its source, in Itasca Lake, he found the Indians cultivating corn on its head waters. At Cass Lake they informed him that the crop was always relied on, that seed corn was preserved from year to year, and the crop never known to fail. At Red Lake, north of the 48th parallel, the traders assured him that corn was a profitable crop, and that it was grown there in such quantities that it was sometimes furnished to the posts on the

Upper Mississippi, and even as far east as Fond du Lac, at the head of Lake Superior. Franchere, whose work has already been mentioned, thus speaks of one of the Northwest company's trading posts on Lake Winipeg in 1814, north of the 50th parallel of latitude :

"This trading post had more the appearance of a large and well-cultivated farm than of a fur trader's factory; a neat and elegant mansion built on a slight eminence and surrounded with barns, stables, store-houses, &c. and by fields of barley, peas, oats and potatoes, reminded us of the civilized countries which we had left so long ago."

A very domestic picture truly, and we thank Mons. Franchere for limning it away out there in the wilderness for our information and gratification. A few days afterwards Franchere and his companions had their visions of civilized life renewed by coming upon another farm on Rainy Lake quite equal to the one they had seen at Lake Winipeg.

It is a well known fact that the Indians of all this region make large quantities of maple sugar, and it may be set down as an established truth, that the presence of sugar maple is a sure indication of a rich and productive soil.

Flowing southward from the highlands which terminate the basin of Lake Superior on the North is one of the loveliest and most romantic rivers upon the continent, bearing the beautiful name of Kaministiquia, or, following more closely the Indian orthography, Kaministiquia. Franchere was filled with ecstasy while contemplating the magnificent scenery through which this river makes its way. Numerous cascades and three or four cataracts serve to add the element of grandeur. One of the latter, Franchere esteems scarcely inferior in this respect to the Falls of Niagara. Nearly the whole of the Kaministiquia Valley is susceptible of profitable cultivation. Sir George Simpson, in his recent work, entitled "An Overland Journey around the World," speaks of it in the following terms :

"The river during the day's march, passed through forests of elm, oak, pine, birch, &c., being studded with isles not less fertile and lovely than its banks; and many a spot reminded us of the rich and quiet scenery of England. The paths of the numerous portages were spangled with violets, roses and many other wild flowers, while the currant and gooseberry, the cherry, and even the vine were abundant. All this bounty of nature was imbued as it were with life, by the cheerful notes of a variety of birds, and by the restless flutter of butterflies of the brightest hues. Compared with the adamantine deserts of Lake Superior, the Kaministiquia presented a perfect paradise. One cannot pass through this fair valley without feeling that it is destined, sooner or later, to become the happy home of civilized men, with their bleating flocks and their lowing herds, with their schools and their churches, with their full garners and their social hearths. At the time of our visit the great obstacle in the way of so blessed a consummation, was the hopeless wilderness to the eastward" "which seemed to bar for ever the march of settlement and cultivation. But that very wilderness, now that

it is to yield up its long hidden stores, bids fair to remove the impediments which hitherto it has itself presented. The mines of Lake Superior, besides establishing a continuity of route between the east and the west, will find their nearest and cheapest supply of agricultural produce in the valley of the Kaministiquia."

Further westward, the same author speaks in no less enthusiastic terms of the character of the country, and of its adaptation to populous settlement. Between Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods he found a region especially fascinating as will appear by the following passage :

"The river which empties Lac la Pluie into the Lake of the Woods is decidedly the finest stream on the whole route in more than one respect. From Fort Francis downwards, a stretch of nearly a hundred miles, it is not interrupted by a single impediment, while yet the current is not strong enough materially to retard an ascending traveller. Nor are the banks less favorable to agriculture, than the waters themselves to navigation, resembling in some measure, those of the Thames near Richmond. From the very brink of the river there rises a gentle slope of green sward, crowned in many places with a plentiful growth of birch, poplar, beech, elm and oak. Is it too much for the eye of philanthropy to discern through the vista of futurity, this noble stream, connecting as it does the fertile shores of two spacious lakes, with crowded steamboats on its bosom, and populous towns on its borders?"

But I must proceed another stage westward to the valley of the Red River of the North. A colony was planted on this river about the year 1811, by Lord Selkirk, under the auspices of the Hudson Bay Company. It has remained there, with varied fortune, to the present day, increasing in population, in comfort and in wealth. The total population of the settlements is estimated at the present time to be between 7,000 and 8,000. The town of Pembina was originally the capital of the colony, but when the boundary line was run between the United States and the British possessions, it was found to be south of the 49th parallel. The Governor and the other officials, on learning this fact, at once removed further down the river to the other side of the line. But Pembina continues to be quite an important settlement. It has been organized into a county of Minnesota, and last summer, while on Lake Superior, I had the pleasure of meeting with the Representative from that county to the Territorial Legislature, from whom I learned many facts respecting the colony and the country. Churches and schools are organized and maintained in these settlements, and the society is such as you would expect to find in a community of simple-minded, industrious people entirely removed from the whirl and excitement of speculation and the frivolities and inanities of fashionable life. There are some eighteen wind-mills and two water mills in the settlements. Wheat of a very superior quality is grown there, as would undoubtedly be the case at most of the posts of the Hudson Bay Company, in even higher latitudes than this, were there mills to

grind it. As it is, our tourists speak only of "fields of oats, barley, peas, and potatoes." From all that I can learn of the quality of the Red River wheat, I conclude that it is superior to any grown upon the continent. The best Illinois wheat weighs from 60 to 63 lbs. to the measured bushel. The best Genesee from 60 to 65 lbs. Red River wheat weighs from 65 to 70 lbs. to the measured bushel. Forty bushels to the acre is the average on new ground, and thirty bushels is an ordinary yield. The crop very rarely fails. So much I have heard verbally from citizens of the country. Now let us turn again to our written authorities.

Col. Long, who visited this region in 1822-3, says agriculture is attended with success; wheat, barley, millet, pulse, potatoes, and other culinary roots are cultivated.

Sir George Simpson, whose residence as Governor of the Hudson Bay Company is there, in speaking of Fort Garry, which is north of the 50th parallel, describes the country as being, on the west side of the river, one vast prairie, and on the other side wooded with birch, oak, elm, and pine; that the soil yields forty bushels of wheat to the acre, and even after being cultivated twenty years, yields fifteen to twenty-five bushels per acre.

Sir John Richardson states that the vegetation in the valley of the Red River is similar to that of the State of New Hampshire. The former is about five degrees north of the latter.

I have, in the preceding part of this discourse, read you an extract from David Dale Owen's report, concerning a settlement of civilized Cree Indians, who reside upon this river, to which I now add the following remark by the same author: "The general agricultural character of the Red River country is excellent; the land is highly productive, especially in small grain. The principal drawbacks are occasional protracted droughts during the midsummer months, and freshets during the spring, which from time to time overflow large tracts of low prairie. Its tenacious subsoil insures its durability."

The valley of this river is 300 by 150 miles in extent, containing 45,000 square miles—larger than many of the States of the Union. Captain Pope, of the U. S. army, whom many of you know personally—a native of Illinois, and son of the late lamented Judge Pope, a young gentleman of fine abilities and solid attainments—conducted an exploration into this country by order of the Government in 1849. After stating in his report that the Mississippi was navigable 400 miles in Minnesota; the Red River the same distance; the St. Peters 120, and the Jamez River, a tributary of the Missouri, nearly 200 miles, Capt. Pope remarks, that nature has been

even more lavish in her gifts of soil than in her channels of communication. The numerous lakes between the Mississippi and the Red River are surrounded by a gently undulating country of the most fertile character, and abundantly supplied with all the forest trees common to so northern a latitude. He traversed the country from north to south, a distance of five hundred miles, and, with the exception of a few swamps, saw not one acre of unproductive land. The soil, he says, is the black mould, several feet in thickness, with various proportions of sand sufficient to give the necessary warmth. The valley of the Red River, which, as I have already stated on his authority comprises 45,000 square miles, he represents as presenting in its whole extent an almost unbroken level of rich prairie, intersected by heavily timbered tributaries of the river, the main river itself being also heavily timbered on both banks with oak, elm, ash, maple, &c. This valley, he says, is among the finest wheat countries of the world.

Mr. Thomas Simpson, of the Hudson Bay Company's service, in the "narrative of his discoveries on the north coast of America in 1836-37", says of the Manitoba House, situated about one hundred miles north of the Red River colony, that the "soil and climate of this place equals Red River. Barley, wheat and potatoes yield in most seasons excellent returns. The lake produces very fine white fish on some of its tributary streams; tolerable salt is obtained from saline springs, and the wild hop grows in many places in great profusion and of good quality."

If further proof of the existence of a vast and fertile region from two to five hundred miles west of Lake Superior were needed, it could be furnished, but the above will certainly be regarded as entirely satisfactory.

Proceeding a few hundred miles northwestward from the Selkirk settlement, we strike the valley of the Saskatchewan River. The Saskatchewan is an important stream, adapted to steamboat navigation, having its sources in the Rocky Mountains, and discharging its waters into Lake Winnipeg. The French, originally, and afterwards the Northwest and Hudson Bay Companies, established trading posts along the entire valley of both branches of the Saskatchewan. It is described as a most charming region of country, fertile and well wooded. Sir John Richardson states that wheat grows finely in it, that it ripens well in the dryer limestone districts, and better in the prairie country; but in the latter it is subject to periodical ravages of the larva of caterpillars. He adds, however, that this plague might be lessened were the country more generally cultivated, and rooks and domestic poultry

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Hudson Bay Company—Its Rights in the Northwest—Negotiations to Purchase them—Secretary Guthrie and Buchanan's Cabinet.

stated some time since that the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House were about to report a bill to purchase the possessory rights of the Hudson's Bay and Rupert's Sound Agricultural Company, and that an appropriation of \$250,000 would be asked by the committee, which amount it was understood would be sufficient to liquidate and satisfy the parties interested. This information was obtained from the State Department; but it now appears that since it has been ascertained that our government are desirous of making the purchase, the parties interested here, who are Englishmen—and one of them is a Mr. Lumley, who has been attending the business of the legation since the dismissal of Crampton—we now informed our government that \$250,000 is not sufficient—that they will inform the proper authorities of the exact amount required, as soon as they ascertain from the company. The government are determined, it is understood, not to allow the price to exceed \$300,000, and that it is the intention of the committee, both of the Senate and House, provided there is not some arrangement made very soon, to report a bill authorizing the President to enter into negotiations for the purchase of the rights above alluded to.

I have some information in reference to the conditions and workings of this company, which I believe have never been stated, and as it is exciting some interest just now, I will give it publicly. It is of correct, as has been stated, that the charter of the company expires in 1858. The error probably arose from the fact that in 1836 the British Parliament gave the company a license of exclusive trade with the Indians for 21 years. The charter was granted in 1670 by Charles II., a company styled "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, Trading to Hudson's Bay." The grant included territories comprising half a million square miles, and was in free and common usage on payment of two alkas and two beavers whenever the sovereignty of England should visit them. It was made perpetual, here are about two hundred members in the company, it is a stupendous monopoly. Its profits are now immense. The profit of a share last year was \$10,000. Some members own several shares. It is estimated that 400,000 worth of furs are furnished to the company from the territory of the United States annually. To prevent this, a fort is needed on the Red River of the North. The government of the company's territory is administered by governors and councils of chief factors and chief traders, at their various establishments, the principal of which is the Red River settlement. The principal artery, Red River settlement is 550 miles above St. Paul. I learn from a gentleman who recently returned from Pennsylvania to this city, that there is a tremendous outside pressure among a certain interest in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, in favor of the retention of Secretary Guthrie by the next administration, and that it

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basca, Sir Alexander Mackenzie came upon many charming views, a description of one of which I transcribe:

"Within a mile of the termination of the portage is a precipice, which rises upward of a thousand feet above the plain beneath it, and commands a most extensive, romantic and ravishing prospect. From thence the eye looks down on the course of the little river, by some called the Swan, and by others the Clear Water and Pelican River, beautifully meandering for upwards of thirty miles. The valley which is at once refreshed and adorned by it, is about three miles in breadth, and is confined by two lofty ridges of equal height, displaying a most delightful intermixture of wood and lawn, and stretching on till the blue mist obscures the prospect. Some parts of the inclining heights are covered with stately forests, relieved by promontories of the finest verdure, where the elk and buffalo find pasture. These are contrasted by spots where fire has destroyed the woods and left a dreary void behind it. Nor, when I beheld this wonderful display of uncultivated nature, was the moving scene of human occupation wanting to complete the picture. From this elevated situation, I beheld my people, diminished as it were, to half their size, employed in pitching their tents in a charming meadow and among the canoes, which being turned on their sides, presented their reddened bottoms in contrast with the surrounding verdure. It was in the month of September when I enjoyed a scene of which I do not presume to give an adequate description; and as it was the rutting season of the elk, the whistling of that animal was heard in all the variety which the echoes could afford it."

Sir John Richardson says of the country in the same vicinity, that from Methy Portage westward the country, though deeply furrowed by river courses and ravines, and more or less thickly wooded, partakes so much of a prairie character that horsemen may travel over it to Lesser Slave Lake and the Saskatchewan. In the valley of this river Sir George Simpson encountered emigrants from Red River, moving with horses and wagons to Oregon, which fact indicates clearly the practicable character of the country. Indeed Sir George, in another place, mentions that from Carlton House to Bow River, about one hundred miles, he passed through a country very much resembling an English Park.

The agricultural value of the Athabasca valley increases as it approaches the mountains, the rigor of the climate being more strikingly modified by the warm winds from the Pacific. But throughout its entire length, as well as in a considerable portion of the valley of Mackenzie's River, the Hudson Bay and Northwest Companies have grown at their several posts, oats, barley, potatoes, pulse, and at some places wheat. Indeed wheat has been grown at Fort Laird, on a tributary of the Mackenzie River, in latitude 60° 5' North, while barley, potatoes, &c., are grown up to 65° North latitude. At Fort Simpson, on the Mackenzie, in 62° North latitude, Sir John Richardson states that "barley is usually sown from the 20th to the 25th of May, and it is expected to be

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Says this Co. was formed
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With which profound and knotty questions we must leave Mons. Franchere and the charming valley of the Saskatchewan.

The next most important valley westward is that of the Athabasca River, with its tributaries, which flows into Great Slave Lake. This region is spoken of by most of the writers we have already quoted in a similar strain to their notices of the Saskatchewan valley. While passing down one of the minor tributaries of the Atha-

ground it. As it is, our tourists speak only of "fields of oats, barley, peas, and potatoes." From all that I can learn of the quality of the Red River wheat, I conclude that it is superior to any grown upon the continent. The best Illinois wheat weighs from 60 to 63 lbs. to the measured bushel. The best Genesee from 60 to 65 lbs. Red River wheat weighs from 65 to 70 lbs. to the measured bushel. Forty bushels to the acre is the average on new ground, and thirty bushels is an ordinary yield. The crop very rarely fails. So much I have heard verbally from citizens of the country. Now let us turn again to our written authorities.

Col. Long, who visited this region in 1822-3, says agriculture is attended with success; wheat, barley, millet, pulse, potatoes, and other culinary roots are cultivated.

Sir George Simpson, whose residence as Governor of the Hudson Bay Company is there, in speaking of Fort Garry, which is north of the 50th parallel, describes the country as being, on the west side of the river, one vast prairie, and on the other side wooded with birch, oak, elm, and pine; that the soil yields forty bushels of wheat to the acre, and even after being cultivated twenty years, yields fifteen to twenty-five bushels per acre.

Sir John Richardson states that the vegetation in the valley of the Red River is similar to that of the State of New Hampshire. The former is about five degrees north of the latter.

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even more lavish in her gifts than in the channels of communication, between the Mississippi and the Red River, surrounded by a gently sloping soil, is the black loam, which, in his authority comprised an almost unbroken level selected by heavily timbered river, the main river itself timbered on both banks with maple, &c. This valley, he estimates wheat countries of the west.

Mr. Thomas Simpson, of the Hudson Bay Company's service, in his discoveries on the north side of the lake, about one hundred miles from the Red River, says of the soil, "The soil equals Red River. Barley yields in most seasons excellent produce very fine from saline springs, and in many places in great profusion."

If further proof of the fertility of the region from two to three miles west of Lake Superior were furnished, but the above will be entirely satisfactory. Proceeding a few hundred miles from the Selkirk settlement, we find the Saskatchewan River. It is an important stream, adapted for navigation, having its sources in the Rocky Mountains, and discharging its waters into the Hudson Bay.

The French, originally, and afterwards the Northwest and Hudson Bay Companies, established trading posts along the entire valley of both branches of the Saskatchewan. It is described as a most charming region of country, fertile and well wooded. Sir John Richardson states that wheat grows finely in it, that it ripens well in the dryer limestone districts, and better in the prairie country; but in the latter it is subject to periodical ravages of the larvae of caterpillars. He adds, however, that this plague might be lessened were the country more generally cultivated, and rooks and domestic poultry

BARBES, COI
COLLARS and SETTS.
720 Broadway, corner of W
LADIES FASHION
Beautiful mink capes,
Beautiful mink victorines and
Beautiful mink suits,
Fine Hudson
Genuine, rich and rare:
Pure royal ermine,
Handsome stone marten and f
Real Russian sable,
Very fine old
With every other description of fur at hand,
GEO. HULLER,
N. B.—All our stock at from 25 to 50 per ce
prices.

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GEO. HULLER,
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LACE CURTAINS.
JAMES CROPSY, 481 Broadw
Has just received a large assortment of lace
most elegant description, which he is selli
will defy competition.

MISSSES' AND CHILDREN'S FURS—
AT
GEMIN'S BAZAAR, 513 BROAD
Misse's ermine capes, gulls and muffs;
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Particular attention having been paid to th
for business, ladies will find it the only place
a complete assortment of furs for Misse's,
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THE FORTY DOLLAR SILK D
We have been selling at
25 DOLLARS
Will be offered th
A. T. STE
Broadway, Chambers a

PAVILION DE FLOEA
Offers toilet attractions
From first class houses in Pa
Trustful and of artists in
JAMES TUCKER.

PRESENTS FOR GENTLEMEN.
Velvet robes, \$10. Fine scarfs, collars
Wholesale or retail. FINE, SCARFS, COLLARS
ISA PEREGO & SON,
No. 611

PRESENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS—
AT
GEMIN'S BAZAAR, 513 BROAD
Misse's walking coats, Misse's dresses,
Boys' coats, Boys' suits, Boy
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Ladies' opera cloaks, Ladies' robes de chambre,
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SARLES, COI
S and SETTS.
 728 Broadway, corner of W
ROY FUR
 Beautiful mink victorias and
 Beautiful mink muffs,
 Fine Hudson
 and rare:
 Royal ermine,
 Handmade stone marten and
 Real Russian sable.
 Very fine skins,
 other description of fur at special
 price.
GEO. BULFIN.
 Fur stock at from 25 to 50 per cent

PAINE
JAMES GROFSEY, 421 Broad
 We have a large assortment of lace
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CHILDREN'S FURS—
MIN'S BAZAAR, 513 BROAD
 capes, cuffs and muffs;
 Misses' mink capes, cut
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 Smoking jackets,
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MIN'S BAZAAR, 513 BROAD
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encouraged. He also says that maize ripens well at Carlton House, a post of the Hudson Bay Company, in 52° 51' north latitude, at a height of eleven hundred feet above the level of the sea, and he believes it is cultivated likewise at Cumberland House, which is situated a degree further north, where the summer heat exceeds that of Brussels or Paris. At Fort Edmondton, on the same river, in latitude 54°, near the Rocky Mountains, Gov. Simpson says potatoes, turnips, and other hardy vegetables are grown, but the wheat is destroyed by the early frosts. At the Cumberland House, another trading post, Franchere saw cultivated fields in 1811—barley and peas especially promising an abundant harvest. This last mentioned writer, although a practical business man, was rendered quite poetic by the sylvan beauties of this region. I quote a passage from his narrative:

"The River Saskatchewan flows over a bed composed of sand and marl, which contributes not a little to diminish the purity and transparency of its waters, which like those of the Missouri are turbid and whitish. Except for that, it is one of the prettiest rivers in the world. The banks are perfectly charming, and offer in many places scenes the fairest, the most smiling and the best diversified that can be seen or imagined; hills in varied forms crowned with superb groves; valleys agreeably embrowned at evening and morning by the prolonged shadow of the hills and of the woods which adorn them; herds of light-limbed antelope, and of heavy colossal buffalo—the former bounding along the slopes of the hills, the latter trampling under their heavy feet the verdure of the plains; all these champaign beauties reflected and doubled as it were by the waters of the river; the melodious and varied songs of a thousand birds, perched on the tree-tops; the refreshing breath of the zephyrs; the serenity of the sky; the purity and salubrity of the air; all in a word pours contentment and joy into the soul of the enchanted spectator. * * * How comes it to pass, said I to myself, that so beautiful a country is not inhabited by human creatures? The songs, the hymns, the prayers of the laborer and the artisan, shall they never be heard in these fine plains? Wherefore, while in Europe so many thousands of men do not possess as their own an inch of ground, and cultivate the soil of their country for proprietors who scarcely leave them whereon to support existence—wherefore do so many millions of acres of apparently fat and fertile land remain uncultivated and absolutely useless? Or at least, why do they support only herds of wild animals? Will men always love better to vegetate all their lives on an ungrateful soil, than to seek afar fertile regions in order to pass in peace and plenty at least the last portion of their days?"

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ripe on the 20th of August, after an interval of 92 days. In some seasons it has ripened on the 15th. Oats, which take a longer time, do not thrive so well, and wheat does not come to maturity. Potatoes yield well, and no disease has affected them, though the early frosts sometimes hurt the crop."

This takes us into the mountains, and beyond into Oregon, Washington and the adjacent British Possessions, of all of which I can only say that it is a magnificent country, producing wheat, and other small grain up to the 54th parallel, growing all the esculents, abounding in wood, water, fish, coal and iron, and doubtless other valuable minerals.

The route by which we have thus traveled over the continent has inclined in a Northwesterly direction, on which account the Northern portion of Nebraska has been avoided. This section I have purposely left for the last, because of the impression which generally obtains, that it is a barren waste, an arid desert, which must forever remain unpeopled, beside proving an impassable barrier to all attempts to extend our lines of railroad across the continent to the Pacific Ocean. Time will not permit of a detailed description of this country. I will content myself with giving you the observations of a single person respecting it, after a critical personal examination. Mr. A. W. Tinkham, brother of our fellow-townsmen, E. I. Tinkham, Esq.—a civil engineer and a gentleman of superior ability, who held a prominent position in Gov. Steven's survey of the northern route for a railroad to the Pacific, thus sums up briefly the leading characteristics of the section in question:

"A good deal of the country is poor, ill-wooded, and with a poor soil. There is no such thing as desert country or destitution of water any where. Still there is a great deal of country which is not promising for cultivation, and is not likely ever to be thickly settled. * * * All of this country produces grass, and is roamed over by the buffalo, and I should judge might be used in extensive grazing. But even in this, the most unpromising part of the route, at intervals are pleasant and fertile spots which will repay cultivation—as the valleys of some of the smaller streams—and between grazing and tilling it will perhaps be possible to occupy the greater part of the lands. It should be recollected, too, that the country has been but very partially explored, and that the examinations will bring to light valuable lands."

MINERALS.

The subject of minerals must be dismissed with a very brief and cursory notice. Fur traders are not much given to explorations for minerals. California and Oregon had been roamed over for a century or more by them—the gold-bearing streams and gulches and canons had been traversed and trapped over again and again, but the secret of their untold treasures, lying almost on the surface, remained unknown

until this class of men had been superseded by another, and then the world was astounded with the discoveries which followed. The same class of men have occupied the iron and copper-bearing region of Lake Superior, for nearly two centuries, but the vast mineral wealth existing there—greater in all probability than that of California—was left unmolested in its native hills, and it is only within the last ten years that the world has been made even partially cognizant of its magnitude and richness. It is true, that copper had been known to exist on the margin of Lake Superior for many years previous. The Indians had some knowledge of it, and communicated what they knew on the subject to the traders. A large boulder of virgin copper was exposed to view upon one of the forks of the Ontonagon River by the action of the water, and this was talked of by the voyageurs and trappers on returning from their excursions to the posts of the respective companies, and occasional notices of it found their way into the public prints. But this would probably be the present sum-total of our knowledge of the subject, had not the trappers and Indians given place to a class of men possessed of the enterprise and requisite knowledge to trace up to their original sources these metalliferous formations, by the debris carried down the water-courses and by other well known marks.

We have the same evidence of the existence of mineral districts in other portions of the country under consideration that formerly comprised our entire stock of knowledge relative to the copper and iron of Lake Superior. The Indians from time to time have displayed metals of different descriptions at the trading posts, though they have but seldom disclosed the places from which they were taken. Perhaps they were not hard-pressed on this point by the traders for the reasons before alluded to. I must, however, do the Hudson Bay Company the justice to note a remarkable effort, on their part, to discover a copper mine, intimations of which had been repeatedly given by the Indians. Mr. Hearne, an officer of that company, residing at Fort Prince Wales, undertook, and after two or three failures, succeeded in conducting successfully, an expedition to the Arctic Ocean, near which the mine was reported to be. He found the precise spot designated by the Indians, found some copper also, but not being provided with the requisite means for prosecuting discoveries, returned to Fort Prince Wales very little wiser on that subject than before.

Some of the oxides of copper have been found in various localities upon the head waters of the Mississippi, and it is not improbable that subse-

quent explorations will reveal their existence in sufficient quantity to justify the establishment of furnaces for working them.

Iron is of frequent occurrence, not only in the eastern and southern sections of the district under review, but along its northern boundary also, and on the Pacific coast, and among the mountain ranges. Indeed I am tempted to believe that a very large proportion of the northern part of the continent will ultimately be found to be rich in nearly all of the valuable minerals—the metalliferous districts terminating only with the terminus of land. This hypothesis is strengthened by recent discoveries made in Greenland, which country is in reality but a continuation of the Western Hemisphere. An Anglo-Danish Company is at this time engaged in carrying on mining operations there, and one of the Company's vessels not long since arrived at London having on board valuable specimens of black lead, plumbago, silver, lead, copper and tin ores, native silver, lignite and coal. The presumption is by no means an unwarrantable one, that congeners of all the ores discovered in Greenland exist in greater or less quantity upon the continent, also. That some of them do is well established fact.

But to return from the field of conjecture, I remark in the next place upon the existence of coal in a large portion of the country. Franchère and Gov. Simpson speak of its outcropping at different places on the Saskatchewan. Lewis and Clark saw bituminous coal between Fort Clark and the falls of the Missouri River. Culbertson also saw coal in the same localities. Wyeth saw large quantities of it on the Yellow Stone. Gov. Stevens' party found the whole country from the falls of the Missouri westward to the mountains, nearly five hundred miles, underlaid with lignite. Bonneville speaks of regions among the mountains near the head waters of the Yellowstone, which abound in anthracite coal. In fact, coal has been traced along the 47th parallel of latitude for a distance of nearly ten degrees of longitude, with a southern outcrop, rendering it more than probable, when considered in connection with the discoveries of coal in the Saskatchewan, the Athabasca, Mackenzie's River, and Great Bear Lake, that a coal field of greater extent than any other in the world exists in the western half of the district of country included in our subject. Further evidence is found to support this hypothesis in the discoveries of coal nearly all around the northern rim of the North American continent by the captains of whaling vessels, and by the hardy explorers who have tempted the Arctic seas in search of a north-west passage, by the presence of both coal and lignite in Greenland,

upon Disco Island and upon the Faroe Islands off the coast of Greenland—thus indicating the wonderful economy of nature, or rather the existence of a beneficent Providential design, by which regions destitute of timber are supplied with an easily accessible fuel.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie found bitumen fountains in the valley of the Athabasca, into which he thrust poles twenty feet in length without finding bottom. In Silliman's *Journal* I find an account of a similar lake of pitch, or bitumen, on Trinidad, one of the West India Islands. Silliman says:

It is believed to be a submerged bed of vegetable matter, undergoing slow distillation by volcanic action underneath. This store of bitumen appears to be inexhaustible. It is used with wood for fuel by the American steamers plying on the Orinoco River. Mixed with pebbles and sand it makes excellent pavements, and ground floors of houses. With ten per cent. of rosin oil it makes good pitch for ships. The Earl of Dundonald has purchased a tract of 26 acres of it, and has instituted experiments to discover, if possible, some means for making it a substitute for India-rubber and gutta percha water-proof or vulcanized fabrics; and he has already made some vulcanized cloth, which, from appearances, bids fair of future success.

Thus, when this vast country comes to be peopled, not only will good soil be found there, but material, in great abundance, for fuel and for manufacturing purposes. Think of a manufactory, away up there on Athabasca River, sending down vulcanized fabrics made from these bituminous fountains, and competing with the India Rubber and gutta percha water-proof clothing of Horace H. Day & Co., of New York!

Lead has been found in the Cascade Mountains. And the Indians of that region have often brought into the posts of the Hudson Bay Company platina and silver ore—though they have never revealed the locality in which they procure it. Gold has recently been discovered at Fort Colville, and men wholly unskilled in the occupation have taken out from ten to twenty dollars per day. Fort Colville is in the Bit'er Root range of mountains, in 48° 45' north latitude. The discoveries already made indicate the existence of an extensive gold-bearing region in Washington Territory; and it is not improbable, that the entire chain of Western Mountains, from the Gulf of California to the mouth of Mackenzie's River, will ultimately be found to contain deposits of this precious metal.

The most extensive systems of salt springs and lakes abound in this region, in different localities, both within the American and the British Possessions, and in some districts the mineral itself is found in great purity and abundance.

Considering the vast amount of minerals already discovered, with scarcely any scientific exploration, the hypothesis is by no means an unreasonable one, that no portion of the continent

exceeds this vast undeveloped Northwest in mineral resources.

CLIMATE.

But notwithstanding the resources of soil, the extensive mineral deposits, and the vast supplies of game which the plains, forests, rivers and lakes of the country contain—still another fatal prejudice in the way of the early settlement of the country remains to be removed. According to the popular impression the rigor of the climate, the length of the winters, and the depth of the snows, render most of the country uninhabitable. This is a sheer fallacy.

It is now understood, generally, that the temperature of any given portion of the earth's surface does not depend entirely upon its latitude. About three-fourths of the earth's surface is covered with water, and the diurnal motion of our planet, with other causes, maintains perpetual ocean currents from the Equator towards the Poles. Thus, that wonderful current in the Atlantic, known as the Gulf Stream, by carrying a large volume of heated water through the ocean directly to the coast of Europe, gives to that country a climate far more temperate than corresponding latitudes on this side of the Atlantic.

Late researches in the Pacific, especially those conducted by the officers attached to the Japan Expedition, have established the existence of a current in that ocean, entirely analogous to the Gulf Stream of the Atlantic. This gulf stream of the Pacific exerts the same influence upon the climate of the western coast of our continent in modifying the temperature, that its congener of the Atlantic does upon the western coast of Europe. Astoria, at the mouth of the Columbia, and Olympia, on Puget's Sound, the one near the 46th the other near the 48th parallel of North latitude, have a climate similar to that of Baltimore, in latitude $39\frac{1}{2}$.

The influence of these thermal waters extends far into the continent. The great water-shed of the mountains, spoken of in an early part of this discourse, occurs in a most marked depression of the coast, it being only about 5,000 feet above the level of the sea. Through this gap in the mountains, several hundred miles in width, and sucking up through the valleys of the interlocking streams, through the canons and gorges, a vast body of warm air direct from the ocean is carried constantly out eastward over the plains, tempering the climate in all its course, until meeting with the colder winds from the Atlantic, an equilibrium of temperature is effected.

As a consequence, Isothermal lines—or lines of equal temperature—drawn east and west across our continent, after passing west of the Lakes, begin to curve northward, cutting par-

allels of latitude diagonally, until they pass the Rocky Mountains, after which they run northward nearly parallel with the coast of the Pacific. Thus, at Quebec, for example, in latitude 47° , the mean temperature for the year is 46° Fahrenheit. A line drawn from Quebec westwardly, to pass through every point at which the mean temperature, for the year, is the same, would bend southwardly at the start, affected, doubtless, by the cold winds which sweep down unobstructedly from Baffin's Bay through Hudson's Bay, but curving northwardly again as it approaches Lake Superior, passing through that lake north of the 45th parallel. Proceeding westwardly from Lake Superior, the line still curves northward, passing nearly half a degree north of Lake of the Woods, which is on the 49th parallel, cutting the southern terminus of Lake Winnipeg north of the parallel of 50° , crossing to the north side of the Saskatchewan River to nearly the 52d parallel, and then proceeding due west for a short distance, where it is met by cold winds from a snow-capped range of the Rocky Mountains, which again curve the line southward along the eastern base of the range, until meeting with a depression it passes west of the mountains, where it suddenly bends to the north again, passing out into the Pacific Ocean nearly ten degrees north of Quebec, the starting point. I have carefully examined such meteorological tables of the country as have been kept at the forts and trading posts within it, all of which, without exception, indicate a climate in those high latitudes much more temperate than would prevail were it not for the causes which I have mentioned, and perhaps some others which future scientific research and discovery may make manifest.

As regards snows a word or two only is necessary. In no part of the country treated of are the snows equal in depth to those of New England. This fact is well known to the fur traders, and there are physical causes why it should be so. Recorded observations at the trading posts, and of late years in Minnesota, establish the fact that the prevailing winds of winter are from the West and North. Those coming from the North, instead of precipitating moisture in the form of snow or rain, constantly have their capacity for retaining moisture increased as they progress southward to a milder region. Those from the West must first cross the mountains, whose snow-clad peaks condense the warm air emitted from the thermal currents of the Pacific, diminish its capacity for retaining moisture, and in effect wring it perfectly dry, when it passes in this condition over the country to the east of the mountains.

In a letter from Hon. H. M. Rice, the present

Representative in Congress from Minnesota, to Gov. Stevens, of Washington Territory, under date of June 3d, 1854, I find the following interesting facts on this subject :

"Navigation of the Mississippi River closes from the 10th to the 25th of November, and opens from the 1st to the 10th of April. That of the Red River of the North closes from 1st to 15th November, and opens from 10th to 25th April. I have often travelled from St. Paul to Crow Wing a distance of one hundred and fifty miles, with a single horse and sled, without a track, and have never found the snow deep enough to impede my progress. I have also gone from Crow Wing, beyond the head waters of the Mississippi, to the waters of the Hudson Bay, on foot and without snow shoes. I spent one entire winter travelling through that region, and never found the snow over eighteen inches deep, and seldom over nine inches.

"For several years I had trading-posts extending from Lake Superior to the Red River of the North from 46 degrees to 49 degrees north latitude, and never found the snow so deep as to prevent supplies being transported from one post to another with horses. One winter, north of Crow Wing, say 47 degrees north latitude, I wintered about sixty head of horses and cattle without giving them food of any kind except such as they could procure themselves under the snow. Between the 45th and 48th degrees north latitude, the snow does not fall so deep as it does between the 40th and 45th degrees: this is easily accounted for upon the same principle that in the fall they have frosts much earlier near the 40th than they do near the 45th degree. I say this in reference to the country watered by the Mississippi River. Owing to its altitude the atmosphere is dry beyond belief, which accounts for the absence of frosts in the fall, and for the small quantity of snow that falls in a country so far north. Voyageurs traverse the territory from Lake Superior to the Missouri the entire winter with horses and sleds, having to make their own roads, and yet with heavy roads are not detained by snow. Lumbermen, in great numbers, winter in the pine regions of Minnesota with their teams, and I have never heard of their finding the snow too deep to prosecute their labors. I have known several winters when the snow at no time was over six inches deep."

Hon. H.H. Sibley, of Minnesota, who has had many years experience in the Northwest as a fur trader, confirms the statements given by Mr. Rice. He further remarks that it is a peculiarity of that climate, that calms prevail during the cold weather of the winter months, consequently the snow does not drift to anything like the extent experienced in New England or New York. Mr. Sibley says he has never believed that railroad communication in that Territory would be seriously impeded by the depth or drift of snow, unless, perhaps, in the extreme northern portion of it. By Mr. Rice's statement, however, it would seem that the qualification given by Mr. Sibley to his opinion, is hardly necessary. Mr. Culbertson, an old fur trader, gives the result of his observation for twenty years of the snows on the head-waters of the Missouri River, as follows :

"The average depth might be estimated at twelve inches, say from the first of December until the first of March ; frequently, however, the snow does not exceed six inches. In the vicinity of Fort Benton snows are

very moderate, and scarcely ever lie longer than one month at a time until they disappear. The climate is a good deal similar to that of the Eastern States. The winters from the Yellowstone down are much more severe, the snow during high winds drifting so, that it is impossible for the traveler to march during these storms ; they, however, seldom last over twenty-four hours. I have never seen snow drift deep enough to stop me on the way."

The fact that, on the head waters of the Columbia and the Missouri, and behind the spurs and in the gorges of the mountains, and away northward up to the 52d parallel of latitude, immense herds of buffalo and great droves of wild horses, pass the winter in good condition, living upon the grass which is not killed out, is of itself sufficient evidence that the snows of the region are not deep, nor the climate very rigorous.

Let this suffice on that head, with the single additional remark, that so long as railroads can be operated in New England and around these lakes in the winter season, it is simply absurd to urge the depth of snow as an objection to the Northern route for the Pacific Railroad.

This long discourse must here end, although the subject is far from being exhausted. In fact, while engaged in its preparation, I was all the while painfully impressed with the magnitude of the subject, constantly realizing how utterly futile must be the attempt to do adequate justice to it in a single lecture. But I trust I have said enough to awaken an interest in that wonderful Northwest which stretches away from our city in almost illimitable extent, and which holds within it so much of promise for us and for humanity. That it will be settled and developed I cannot entertain a doubt. A hardy, enterprising race has already commenced a grand exodus from its former seats to those inviting regions over which we have been traveling in imagination for the last hour. Railroads will, ere long, penetrate the old solitudes. Agriculture, mining and manufactures will supersede the pursuits of the chase. Flourishing villages and populous neighborhoods will start into being as if under the enchanter's wand. Ceres will invert her cornucopia over the favored land. The blighting hoof of slavery shall never touch its green sward, but freedom of body and of mind shall there have its highest realization, and there shall American Civilization achieve its noblest triumphs.

From the Daily Democratic Press of March 17.

The Hudson Bay Company's Monopoly.

Whoever has read the article upon the Undeveloped Northern portion of the American Continent, the publication of which was completed in this paper yesterday, will not have failed to arrive at the conclusion, that the rights claimed by the Hudson Bay Company over a large portion of America are directly antagonistic to the interests of the included country, and that if that giant monopoly shall be left much longer in the undisturbed possession of its quasi title, it will be at the expense of the rights of humanity. It was stated in that article that the validity of the company's charter had been called in question of late years, but that through the influence of wealth, of numbers, and of influential connections at home, it had been able to prevent adjudication upon the subject. A recent exhibition of its power, to the extent even of controlling grave interests of the British Government, is fresh in the public mind. We allude to the compact en-

tered into by the Company with the Government of the Russian Possessions in America.

By special agreement the Hudson Bay Company, several years ago, established a number of trading posts within the Russian Possessions. When the war between Russia and the Allies commenced, these posts, as well as some others in the neighborhood of the Russian Possessions, were at the mercy of the Russian authorities, while the Russian Possessions were at the mercy of the Allies. In this state of the case the Hudson Bay Company entered into a compact with the Governor of Russian America by which the rights of each were mutually guaranteed during the progress of the war. The possessions of the Company which were endangered amounted to only a few thousand dollars. The value of Russian America to the Allies it would be difficult to estimate. But such was the power of the Hudson Bay Company at home, that the Government of Great Britain acquiesced in the arrangement. The splendid fleet of French and English ships sent into the Pacific for the express purpose, doubtless, of seizing upon Russian America, was diverted from its destination, and crossing over to the bleak coast of Kamschatka made a descent upon the insignificant Russian post of Petropavlovski, the possession of which was of no earthly consequence whatever to the Allies.

There is something in this procedure entirely inexplicable to us in the present state of our information. Why the interests of a company, consisting of only some two hundred and fifty persons, should have been thus regarded by the Government of Great Britain, while its own interests, of infinitely greater magnitude, were unhesitatingly sacrificed, can only be accounted for on the hypothesis that there is something beneath the surface which the parties interested would not willingly have divulged. A writer in the *Montreal Gazette* estimates the probable loss to the Hudson Bay Company at from ten to twenty thousand pounds, had the English Government refused to sanction the compact. Had there not been some other cause than is patent upon the surface of the transaction, Great Britain would undoubtedly have indemnified the Company for its loss, and have seized upon the nine hundred thousand square miles of territory belonging to Russia, with its arsenals, towns, etc.

But our object in this article was mainly to call attention to the attitude in which the Government of Great Britain stands before the world in tolerating any longer the existence of the Hudson Bay Company. Here is an immense habitable domain, possessed of great natural resources, and eminently adapted to the abode of civilized communities, kept securely locked against settlement by a few individuals, whose original right there is more than questionable, and which right is said to have been forfeited again and again, if it were valid. And this is done through the agency of the government whose interests all seem to be upon the side of the speedy settlement and development of the country claimed by the Company.

During the continuance of the fierce rivalry which existed between the Hudson Bay and the Northwest companies, the former, that they might cut off the profitable trade which the latter were carrying on with the Indians on the Red River and about the head waters of the Mississippi, established a colony on the former river. This colony furnishes the only instance in which the Company have manifested

a willingness for the settlement of the country, and this exception to its general policy was for the sole purpose of harrassing a hated rival and driving it from the field. Since the union of the two Companies no further encouragement has been offered to immigration to this solitary colony; on the contrary the opposite policy has been pursued. Over those who are there the Company exercises an unchecked despotism, nor have complaints submitted by the colonists to the home government been followed by any relief. In every essential of sovereignty, it may therefore be said, the Government of Great Britain has surrendered its claims to the country to a commercial corporation whose interests are entirely adverse to its settlement.

There is some prospect that steps will shortly be taken whereby the claim set up by the Hudson Bay Company will be tested as regards a portion at least of the territory. There is an unsettled question touching the boundaries of Canada which the latter appears disposed to press to an issue. The jurisdiction which France ceded to Great Britain in 1763, it is claimed, included not only the Canadas, but that it extended westward over a large portion of territory now occupied by the Company. This subject is being discussed in some of the Canadian papers, and has excited some attention on the other side of the Atlantic. A writer in the *Montreal Gazette*, before alluded to in this article, is presenting a series of able and interesting papers on this subject, from one of which we quote the following passage:

There can be little doubt that, whenever the objects and acts of that corporation shall have been thoroughly inquired into and discussed, and have become thoroughly understood, by means of the Press, so unanimous will be the expression of opinion, both in England and Canada, against the Company, that the latter will be made to feel that power which they now apparently despise, and thus have cause to regret that their conduct and pretensions have been such as to arouse the attention of the Press and to obtain, as well as to merit, general condemnation. The English Press is awakening, as well as that of Canada, to a sense of the importance of bringing to an early issue the question of—whether the Hudson's Bay Company shall be permitted, for purely selfish objects, to condemn forever a portion of this continent, as large as the whole of Europe, to the darkest gloom? A question which must soon come before the legislatures of both countries, but which will be decided principally by the action taken upon it here.

We write on this subject in no spirit of national prejudice. The interests of humanity demand a wider and loftier sweep of thought than those of individuals or of nationalities; and those interests require that the giant monopoly which now holds the Northwest in its grasp, be driven out of existence, and the whole country thrown open to settlement. We stop not to inquire whether or not, in the course of human events, a closer bond of sympathy may unite us with the communities which will ultimately be organized there. That is a matter of small importance compared with the consideration whether communities shall be permitted to grow up there at all or not. Only let Great Britain see to it that this broad field for human enterprise is thrown open to occupation, and then let the future take care of itself. We hope to see this subject agitated until the desired results are obtained.

